

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2002-2003 Meeting #13, Tuesday, January 28, 2003

Present: Bitterwolf (chair), Wagner (vice-chair), Bailey, Baillargeon, Chandler, Cloud, Daley Laursen, Haggart (w/o vote), McCaffrey, McClure, McGuire, Pitcher (w/o vote), Rahim, Rinker, Schekler, Stegner **Absent:** Fairchild, Guenther, Hong, Lillard, Nelson, Pikowsky, Reese **Observers:** 5

Call to Order. A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair, Professor Thomas Bitterwolf, called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge.

Minutes. The council accepted the minutes of the January 21, 2003, meeting as distributed.

Introduction. Chair Bitterwolf introduced the newest member of the Faculty Council, undergraduate student representative Peter Stegner.

Chair's Report. Chair Bitterwolf updated the council on his activities while in Boise attending meetings of the SBOE/Regents and the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC). He said the legislative luncheon was very successful. Although the legislative leadership was not able to attend, the faculty leadership was able to talk to about 80 members of the legislature. Bitterwolf reported that it appears from these conversations that a great many legislators believe that the budget crisis is not as severe as the governor has indicated. Because of the uncertainty of projecting revenue and shortfalls, Bitterwolf believes that not much legislation concerning appropriations will reach the governor's desk in the next two months. He said that by the time the financial analysis is finished, the legislature will reach the conclusion that a tax increase will be necessary. Governor Kempthorne will be delivering that message state-wide and Bitterwolf will join in the call for the sales tax increase. He will also seek the support of the students, staff, and faculty in convincing the legislature to act on the governor's budget initiatives.

Provost's Report. Provost Brian Pitcher said that Bitterwolf's analysis of the situation in Boise was correct. The legislature will struggle for some time with these expenditure and revenue issues. U of Idaho President Hoover and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean Larry Branen both appeared before JFAC last week. Hoover's presentation to the budget committee is available at his U of Idaho website. Both Hoover and Branen are scheduled to make presentations to house and senate education committees in a few days. Their focus will be on supporting the governor's budget. The provost announced that JFAC will hold a budget hearing in Moscow on February 8th.

In response to a question raised by Councilor Cloud, Provost Pitcher said, that while not completely out of the question, the declaration of a financial exigency has not come up in SBOE/Regents conversations. He hoped that higher education would not be pushed to such an extreme action, but the university should prepare itself for any number of possible budget scenarios.

Pitcher noted that the SBOE/Regents were unanimous in their support of the three (3) new Ph.D. programs that the U of Idaho presented to them at the last meeting. He said that the proposal presentations by the faculty were excellent and lead to a productive discussion of graduate programs with the board.

FC-03-036, Proposed Consolidation of Advanced Degrees in Biological Sciences. The proposal would consolidate the graduate degrees offered by the Department of Biological Sciences. Instead of offering the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in both Botany and Zoology, the department will offer integrated M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Biology. These changes follow similar modifications made to the undergraduate program last year. The council engaged in a lengthy discussion of the proposed consolidation. The prevalent concern of several council members centered on the loss of the ability for students to specialize in the field, the argument being that the new degree was too general. The subjects of funding, viability, and efficiency within the academic program were also discussed. It was argued by some that this was simply a name change and not a curricular change. However, others countered that a generalization of the name is often the first step to generalization in the course offerings. Chair Bitterwolf brought the discussion back to the central question, the change in degree name. He said that he would ask the University Curriculum Committee to look at the broader ramifications of the great number of degree consolidations that have come to the council this year, apparently as a result of budget adjustments stemming from the financial crisis at the U of Idaho. The motion was **adopted** by majority voice vote (13 aye, 1 nay).

Policy on Program Discontinuance. Chair Bitterwolf and Provost Pitcher told the council that they would present a written policy statement concerning academic program discontinuance for discussion at the next council meeting. A draft of that policy is being presented to the Deans' Council this week.

U of Idaho Benevolent Fund. Pete Baljo, one of the principal authors of the benevolent fund proposal – that each employee be given the opportunity to give one dollar plus the odd cents from each monthly paycheck to the fund – now had received its official non-profit organization designation from the Internal Revenue Service. The funds’ board is now free to go public and set up the process for employees to make donations. Baljo also noted, that because the fund was now incorporated as a non-profit organization, it would be eligible to receive funds from other sources. He closed his presentation by asking the council to appoint a faculty representative to serve on the board of directors of the corporation.

Core Curriculum Report. The Director of the University Core Curriculum, Professor Bill Voxman, reported to the council on the variety of courses that would make up the new core curriculum. He reviewed the core offering categories and the courses that had been approved for each category. Voxman expressed his appreciation to the great number of faculty members who have developed courses specifically to match the objectives of the core curriculum. In response to a question from Councilor Chandler, Voxman said that the Registrar’s Office is working on a plan to account for all the variety of core offerings in order to provide advisors and students with an accurate degree audit. Chair Bitterwolf noted and Professor Voxman agreed, that the offering of upper division courses in the core would probably take a considerable load off the freshman level core courses. The overall result, and one of the core objectives, would be smaller class sizes. Voxman also noted that capstone courses were growing in number and that more will come in future years as academic areas develop ways to cap off the academic experience of their students. At the conclusion of his presentation, Voxman noted that a rather thick advisor guide would be distributed to the faculty and that workshops would be held to help faculty members learn the ins and outs of the core curriculum.

Professor Voxman drew the councils’ attention to an error that he had made in the language of the core description in the U of Idaho catalog. Although he had always presented the cluster course requirement as three courses, along with an 8 credit minimum, he had failed to see that the credit minimum had been left off the catalog description when he brought it to the council and when it was approved by the general faculty last May. Although this was seen as an editorial correction, the Registrar’s Office asked that the council formally approve the catalog wording addition. Therefore, it was **moved and seconded** (Rinker, Rahim) **that the following phrase be editorially added to Regulation J-3-d.: “2. Cluster Courses: Three courses (minimum 8 credits) chosen from . . .”** The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote.

FC-03-037, Proposed Addition to the *Faculty-Staff Handbook* Concerning a “Violence-Free Campus.” The intent of the proposed addition to the handbook is to clearly, but in a generalized fashion, present to the university community information on: university policy; prohibited behavior; how to report policy violations; and related reference materials. The policy language was modeled on an existing policy successfully used at the University of Washington. Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, Pat Sturko, provided the council with background information.

The council discussed the proposed policy and the implications of the use of the term violence and whether or not that term accurately described the prohibited behaviors listed in the proposed handbook addition. That concern seemed more relevant now that the university community was experiencing an increase in the number of demonstrations and marches. Most of the discussion was focused on a list of prohibited behaviors which were identified as being either direct or indirect. In particular, indirect behavior that might be associated with actions such as disrupting the workplace, the academic environment, or the university’s ability to provide services. Most councilors could not see why that sort of behavior would be labeled violent. It could just as well be a “peaceful” disruption. Some councilors were also concerned with the fact the someone could be charged with violating a “violence-free campus” policy or having the words “violence” or “violent” appear in an official report or student disciplinary record, no matter how minor the offense.

Sturko told the council that workplace violence is the fastest growing problem today and is one that usually starts with what some might consider to be insignificant events in the workplace. Some council members thought that the policy was too general. Sturko responded that very specific policy statements were difficult to write and, in fact, a very specific proposal was turned down by the council several years ago. While most of the council could see the value in having this information in one place in the handbook, they had difficulty accepting some of the language, and thought that it could be improved with some editing. Following several suggested editorial changes, Chair Bitterwolf asked Sturko to work with members of the council on the problem areas identified at the meeting, and return to the council next week with an edited proposal.

Adjournment. It was **moved and seconded** (McClure, Baillargeon) to adjourn. The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote, and Chair Bitterwolf adjourned the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Next Meeting. February 4, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Haggart
Secretary of the Faculty Council